
Trust and confidence in charities

An overview of the existing evidence

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1. Background and aims

This report summarises a short piece of work reviewing the current evidence about levels of public trust and confidence in charities and whether they are changing.

In the last year or two, charities have been 'under fire', particularly in the media, on a range of topics¹. A number of initiatives² have responded to the specific issues but there remains concern that all of this may have affected the public's trust and confidence in charities. Although existing research is limited, some evidence is available about public views and trends from the three sources detailed below. One shortcoming of them all, however, is that they do not generally³ relate trust in charities to wider social attitudes, which are known to be changing⁴.

- The longest running and most reliable methodologically is **the Charity Commission survey** of public trust and confidence in the sector, carried out biennially; it was first conducted in 2005 and repeated in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014 (March 2014). It is carried out by Ipsos MORI.
- NfP Synergy currently carries out a monthly survey of attitudes towards charities and other organisations, the NfP Synergy Charity Awareness Monitor, CAM (referred to hereafter as the **NfP Synergy survey**), funded by over 60 subscribing charity members across a wide range of sectors. The most recent published results are for April 2014.
- NPC commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out short surveys geared towards the above issue in January 2014⁵ and October 2014⁶ (referred to as **the NPC surveys** or **the January/October NPC survey**).

Details of the methodology of these surveys, the specific issues they cover and their published reports are provided in Appendix 1. For the questionnaires used in the surveys, see the relevant survey reports; links are provided in Appendix 1. The evidence from these studies is summarised in Sections 2.1 - 2.6.

¹ Key issues have included CEO pay, alleged tax scams by the Cup Trust charity, ethical investments, last summer's Lobbying Bill, Big Society Network investigation, Comic Relief, Muslim charities and issues around the closure of some Muslim charities' bank accounts.

² For example, the NCVO inquiry on executive pay. More recently the Understanding Charities Group was set up, steered by representatives from the Charity Commission, NCVO, NfP Synergy and Scope.

³ The most they do (Charity Commission and NfP Synergy surveys) is to ask about people's trust in a range of public bodies and institutions as well as charities.

⁴ See, for example, the annual editions of the British Social Attitudes reports <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/british-social-attitudes/>

⁵ Report published in March 2014 'Mind the Gap'

⁶ Three reports published, see Appendix for further details

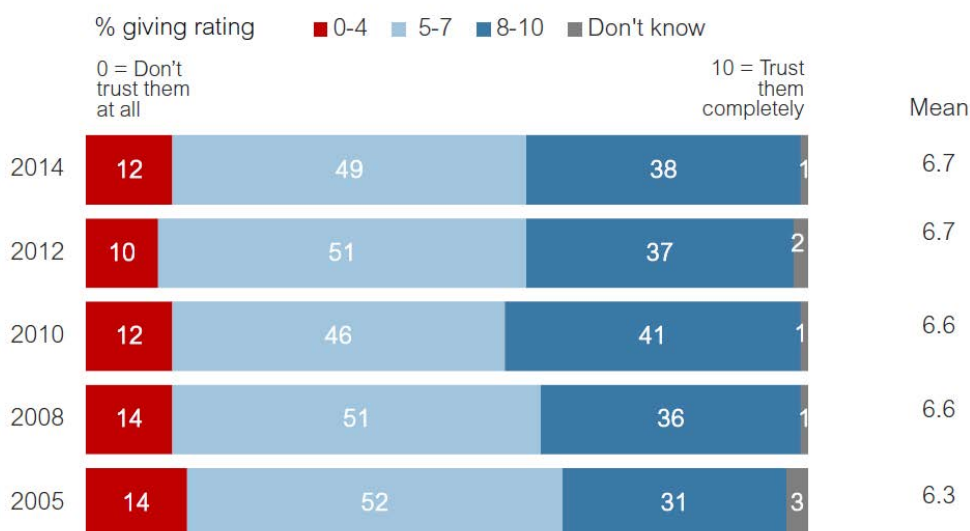
2. What does the current evidence say?

2.1 What is the public's level of overall trust and confidence and has it changed?

Most of the evidence finds no change in the public's overall level of trust and confidence in charities. Trust in charities remains high in comparison with other public bodies and institutions

The 2014 Charity Commission survey found a great deal of trust in the charity sector and an appreciation of the important role of charities across England and Wales. Respondents overall gave an average score of 6.7 out of 10 when asked how much trust and confidence do you have in charities. This has not changed; it is consistent with levels of trust in previous surveys (scores of 6.7 in 2012 and 6.6 in 2010).

Figure 1: On a scale of 0-10..., how much confidence do you have in charities?



Base: Adults aged 18+ in England and Wales – 2014 (1,163); 2012 (1,142); 2010 (1,150); 2008 (1,008), and 2005 (1,001)

Source: Ipsos MORI

This is a high level of trust compared with other public bodies and institutions; of ten other bodies that the survey asked about⁷, only doctors (7.6) and the police (7.0) had higher trust scores than charities (6.7) and this was the same in 2012, 2010 and 2008. Similarly in the **NfP Synergy survey**, people rated their level of trust in charities in 7th place out of 24 public bodies and institutions, with Armed Forces remaining top (70%), followed by the NHS

⁷ The Charity Commission survey asked about: private companies; newspapers; social services; MPs; Government Ministers; your local council; banks; doctors; police; ordinary man/woman in street

(68%) and 'Scouts and Guides'⁸, in the top three (64%); political parties remain bottom (12%).

A somewhat similar picture also emerged from a survey about one particular aspect of trust, people's trust in organisations using their data, carried out by MORI in June 2014 for the Royal Statistical Society⁹. Charities were sixth in the list of institutions with high levels of trust generally and sixth in the list of institutions with high levels of trust for use of data. The four institutions with higher levels of trust reported, both generally and for use of data, were people's own GP surgery, the NHS, the police, and academic researchers & universities¹⁰. Less trusted institutions, both generally and in use of data, included local authorities, banks, the British government, supermarkets, insurance companies and the media/press, with the media/press having the lowest levels of trust.¹¹ generally and for use of data (4% for each). Note, however that in the public and voluntary sectors, the biggest differences between trust in general and trust in use of data (described as 'a trust in data deficit') were found for charities and academic researchers & universities.

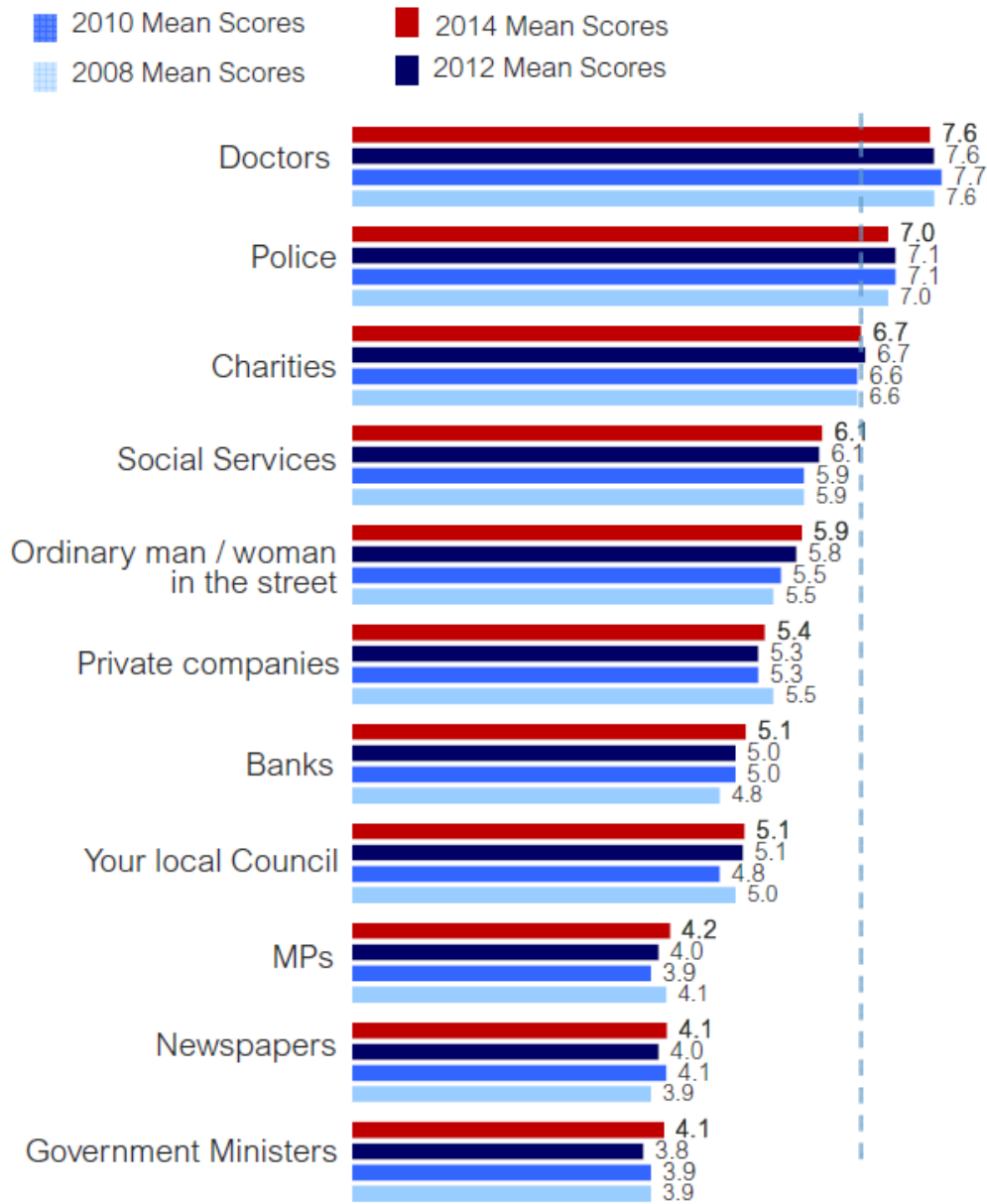
⁸ 'Scouts and Guides' are a separate category in the list, although they are, of course, charities.

⁹ The survey was primarily about public attitudes to the sharing and use of their data but included a question about how much people trusted a range of institutions to use their data appropriately. See <http://www.statslife.org.uk/news/1672-new-rss-research-finds-data-trust-deficit-with-lessons-for-policymakers>

¹⁰ Listed in order of percentage of people reporting high levels of trust (score of 8-10), with GP surgery highest, 49% for trust in general and 41% for trust in use of data. In this survey 27% of people reported high levels of trust in charities generally and 15% trust in use of data.

¹¹ Listed in order of percentage of people reporting high levels of trust (score of 8-10), with proportions for local authorities of 14% for trust in general and 14% for trust in use of data and the proportions lowest for the media/press (4% for each).

Figure 2 Trust scores compared to other organisations and bodies in the public sphere



Base: Adults aged 18+ in England and Wales – 2014 (1,163); 2012 (1,142); 2010 (1,150); 2008 (1,008)

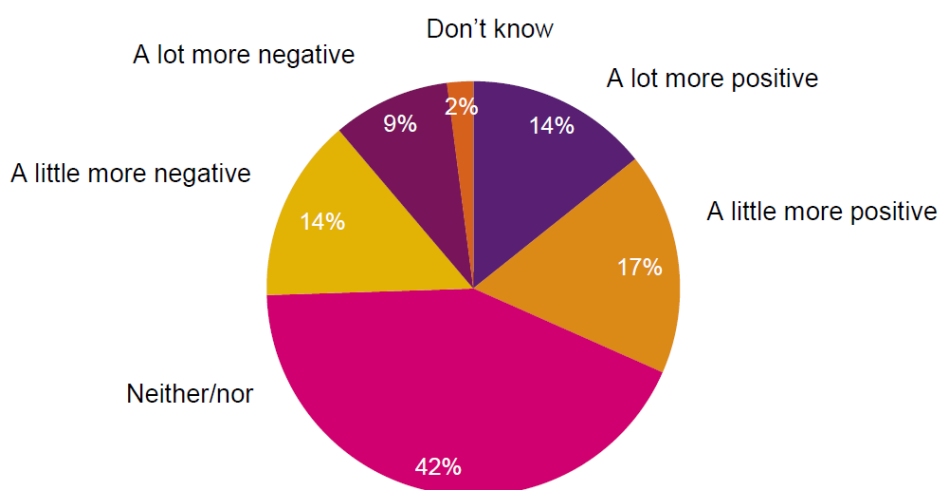
Source: Ipsos MORI

When the Charity Commission survey asked each individual respondent whether their trust and confidence had changed over the past *two* years¹², the majority reported no change (71% compared with 75% in 2012). Although 18% of people said their trust has decreased, compared to 16% in 2012, this difference is not statistically significant¹³.

The January NPC survey asked individual respondents whether their views towards charities had become more positive or negative over the past *three* years. A third (32%) of people said their views had become a lot or a little more positive, compared with a quarter (23%) whose view has become a little or a lot more negative, so the overall reported change was an improvement of nine percentage points.

Fig 3: Perceptions of charities over last 3 years

Thinking back over the past 3 years would you say in general your views towards charities have become...



Base: 1,035 GB adults surveyed in January 2014

The October 2014 survey did not ask this question again, it instead used the Charity Commission question asking people to score their trust on a scale from 0 to 10. The average score was 5.9; although this is a little lower than the latest findings of the Charity Commission, the NPC report notes that the methodology was different (online rather than telephone) and that conclusions cannot be drawn about the trend, the survey should be seen only as a snapshot of how charities are viewed at a point in time. Around a third of people (35%) gave a 'low' score of five or less, perhaps indicating some lack of trust in charities.

¹² Over the past two years, has your trust and confidence in charities increased, decreased or stayed the same?

¹³ When a difference is not statistically significant, it is likely to have occurred by chance rather than representing a 'real' difference; when a difference is not significant at the 95% level, it means that if you kept drawing different random samples of the same size/design, then you would get a difference in only 5% of those samples.

The NfP Synergy survey found that public trust in charities had decreased between 2013 and 2014 (66% of people in 2013 said they trusted charities 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal', compared to 56% in 2014), but there have been a number of fluctuations in this measure of levels of trust since it was first collected in 2003.

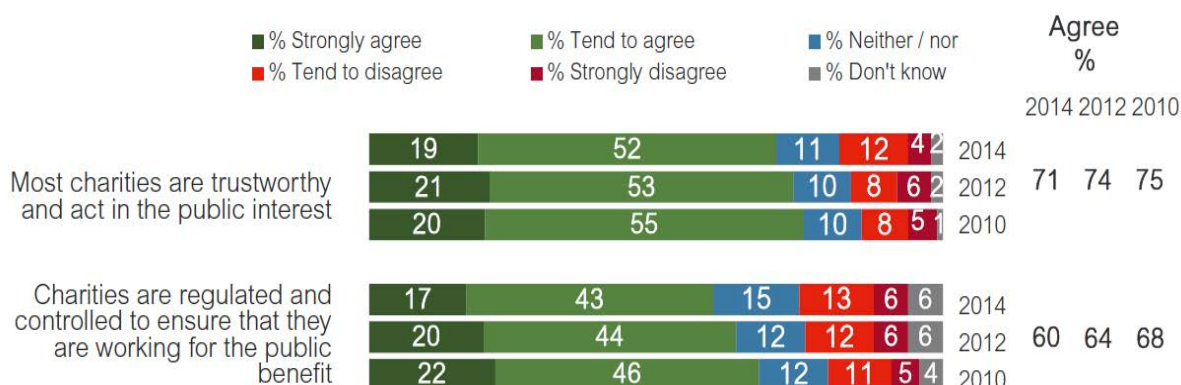
2.2 Has the overall perception of charities' conduct changed?

There was a slightly more negative perception of charities' conduct, with a small decrease in the proportion of people believing that most charities are trustworthy and act in the public interest and a small decrease in the proportion of people believing that charities are regulated and controlled to ensure that they are working for the public benefit.

The 2014 Charity Commission survey found that although the public still tend to agree that *'most charities are trustworthy and act in the public interest'*, this positive perception of their conduct has been slightly eroded over the last four years; the proportion of people agreeing¹⁴ with the statement decreased from 75% in 2010 to 71% in 2014.

There has also been a decrease in the proportion of the public who agree that *charities are regulated and controlled to ensure that they are working for the public benefit*; 60% said this in 2014 compared with 64% in 2012 and 68% in 2010.

Fig 4 = Perception of charities conduct, 2010 to 2014



These two perceptions appear to be related; eight in ten (80%) who agree that the sector is effectively regulated think that charities act in the public interest whereas only four in ten

¹⁴ 'Agree' includes those who say they 'strongly agree' and 'tend to agree'.

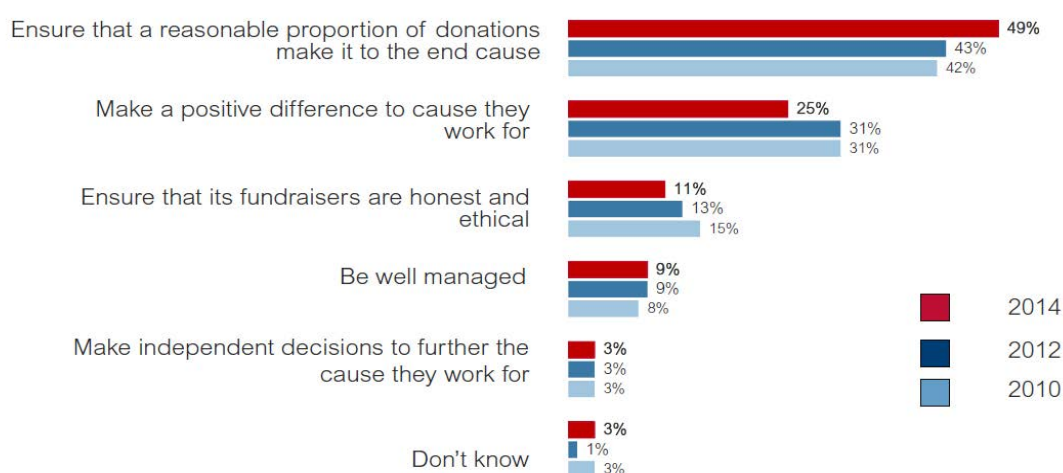
(43%) of those who do not agree that the sector is effectively regulated think that charities act in the public interest.

2.3 Have there been changes in more specific aspects of the public’s views about charities?

There are indications from all the surveys that concerns about use of funds are a key factor in people’s views about charities, including: concerns about donations making it to the end cause, spending too much on executive salaries or running costs and general concern about waste or where the money goes.

The 2014 Charity Commission survey found indications that public trust is being affected by people’s perception of charities’ behaviour, in relation to expenditure and how charities use their funds. For example, although the overall score for how much they trust charities to *‘ensure that a reasonable proportion of donations make it to the end cause’* was similar to previous years (6.1), this aspect is becoming increasingly important to people; almost half (49%) of respondents said this quality was the most important to their trust and confidence in charities overall, compared with two-fifths of people in 2012 and 2010 (43% and 42% respectively). This is the first time that this factor has come out as the most important driver of trust and confidence in the Key Driver Analysis¹⁵; previously it has been what is now the second most important quality, *making a positive difference to the cause they work for* which was cited by a quarter (25%) of people.

Fig 5: Most important aspects to public of trust and confidence in charities



Base: All respondents – 2014 (1163); 2012 (1,142), 2010 (1,150), 2008 (1,008), 2005 (1,001)

Source: Ipsos MORI

¹⁵ A multivariate statistical technique, Key Driver Analysis, is used to identify which of a range of responses throughout the survey are most strongly associated with overall trust and confidence. For further details, see the 2014 report, sec. 2.3.2

Three in five people (58%) agreed with the statement that *charities spend too much of their funds on salaries and administration*. This has not changed over time (the equivalent proportions were 59% in 2012 and 57% in 2010). However, it is a perception that is more common among those who feel that *ensuring a reasonable proportion of donations make it to the end cause is the most important factor to their overall trust*.

The survey report, noting the possible impact of negative media stories at the time of interviewing¹⁶, said that 'it was clear that CEO pay was on some people's minds when talking about what charity expenses are *reasonable*'.

Of the 209 people in the sample who said that their trust and confidence in charities had decreased over the last two years, the most frequently mentioned reasons were:

- media coverage about how charities spend donations (22%)
- don't trust them/don't know where the money goes/waste money (22%)
- media stories about charities generally (21%)

Fundraising techniques used by charities are also a cause of concern. In 2014 two thirds (66%) of the public agreed with the statement *some of the fundraising methods used by charities make me uncomfortable*. Although this had remained stable since 2012 (67%), it had increased between 2010 and 2012 (from 60% in 2010).

The survey report notes that in the qualitative research carried out in addition to the survey¹⁷, additional positive and negative perceptions emerged. There were, for example, negative perceptions of a greater proliferation of charities, accompanied by questions over the need for many different charities to be working for similar causes, mentioned in relation to trust in ensuring that donations are reaching the end cause. This sense of charities working in competition, rather than in partnership, could potentially exacerbate perceptions of insufficient donations reaching the end cause and may affect trust in the sector as a whole.

The January NPC survey found that the top five concerns people had about charities¹⁸ were:

- Charities spend too much on executive salaries (42%)
- Charities are not transparent enough about how they spend their money (36%)
- Charities spend too much abroad (29%)
- Charities put too much pressure on people to donate (29%)
- Charities spend too much on running costs (26%).

¹⁶ Interviewing took place between 3rd and 23rd March 2014

¹⁷ This comprised four discussion groups of 8-10 participants. See Chapter 1 of the survey report for more details.

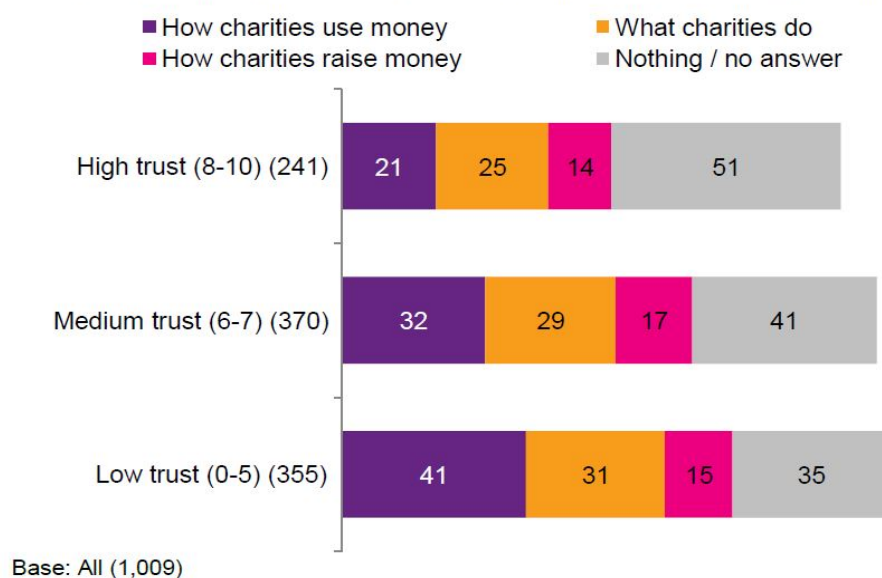
¹⁸ *Which if any of the following do you think are the main things that charities are doing wrong?* Respondents picked up to three from a list of twelve possible problems.

Those whose attitudes towards charities have become more negative in the last two years were more likely than others to say they were concerned about executive salaries (49%) and running costs (36%), broadly similar to the picture painted by the Charity Commission survey. Spending money abroad was also a concern for those whose attitudes had become more negative (34% said this), whilst other issues such as transparency on spending and putting people under too much pressure to donate were less often mentioned.

The NPC October survey asked a slightly different question about their concerns; it was an 'unprompted'¹⁹ question about the main things people thought charities were doing wrong (if anything). Whilst more than 4 in 10 people (43%) raised no concerns, approximately three in ten people (31%) reported concerns relating to aspects of the way charities use money. Most often this related to the amount of money spent on running costs, administration and marketing (13%) or on employee salaries (12%) or executive/senior management salaries (11%). This heading also included concerns around transparency in how charities spend their money, for example '*not stating where the money is going*', mentioned by just under 1 in 10 people (9%). The other two main areas of concern, how charities raise money and what charities do, were mentioned by 28% and 15% of respondents respectively. Figure 6 shows how the distribution across these three types of concerns (and no concerns) varied by respondents' level of trust in charities.

Figure 6: Relationship between overall trust in charities and reported concerns

'What, if anything, do you think are the main things charities are doing wrong?'



Source: NPC

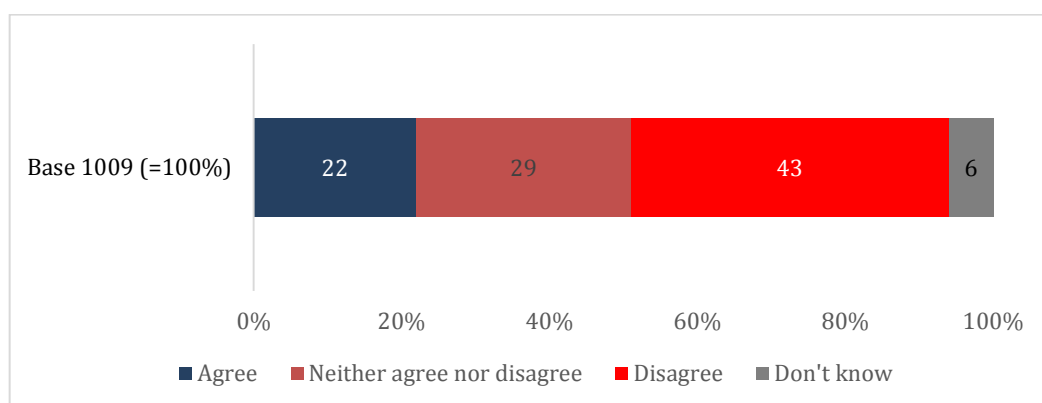
¹⁹ *What if anything, do you think are the main things that charities are doing wrong?* Referred to as 'unprompted' because respondents were allowed to write whatever they liked in reply; the replies, @ 600, were categorised under a number of specific headings and 3 broad headings: how charities use their money; how charities raise money; and what charities do.

As might be expected, respondents with high overall trust in charities were less likely to mention any specific concerns (51% raised no concerns compared to 35% of those with low overall trust).

The proportion of people with concerns about how charities raise money was similar irrespective of the level of trust people had in charities. There were some differences by level of trust in the proportions of respondents with concerns about what charities do but the most striking differences were in the proportions of people reporting concerns in the way charities use money; this ranged from 21% of those with high trust, to 32% among those with medium levels of trust and 41% of those with low overall trust %. This further supports the hypothesis that perceptions about how charities use money are closely related to trust and are among the most important perceptions to address.

The NPC October survey also specifically asked about respondents' attitudes towards Chief Executives' pay²⁰. While 22% agreed that chief executives of charities should be paid the same as their counterparts in the public sector or private companies, 43% disagreed (including 1 in 5, 20%, who disagreed strongly). Respondents with higher reported levels of knowledge (see section 2. 4.2) are more likely to agree that charity CEOs should be paid the same as their counterparts in other sectors; 26% agreed compared with 18% of those lower reported knowledge. Perhaps unsurprisingly there was a greater variation according to levels of trust: more than a third (35%) of those with high levels of trust in charities agreed that charity CEOs should be paid the same, compared with less than a fifth (18%) of those with medium or low levels of trust.

Figure 7: Attitudes to whether Chief Executives Pay should be paid same as counterparts in public and private sector



The NfP Synergy survey found that, when asked which statements a charity could make *that would reassure them about making a donation or would convince them the charity was doing a good job*, people were most likely to select

²⁰ To what extent do you agree or disagree that chief executives of charities should be paid as much as people who run similar size organisations in the public and private sectors?

- every new charity has to be scrutinised by the Charity Commission before it is approved (70%)
- we review all costs every year to keep them low (68%)
- every charity's accounts are on the Charity Commission website (67%).

2.4 How does trust and confidence vary by use, contact and knowledge of charities

2.4.1 Working with charities and use of charity services

The evidence generally shows higher levels of trust among people who work in the charity sector, or have family or friends who do, and among people who report using or benefitting from charity service. The proportion of people using or benefitting from charity services has increased markedly over the last 10 years whilst the proportion working in the sector (or having family/friends who do) has remained fairly stable

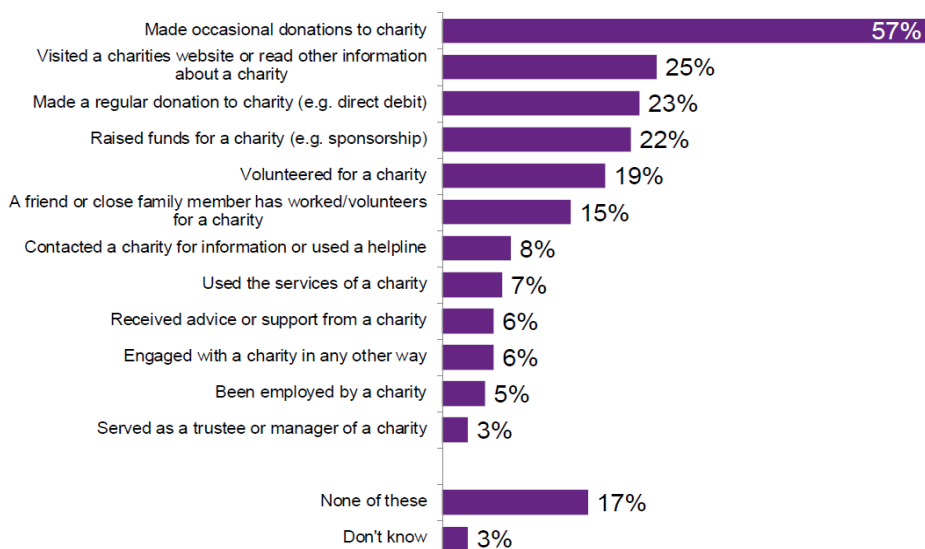
The Charity Commission surveys have generally shown higher overall trust scores among people who personally work in the sector (or have family or friends who do) and those who have used the services of a charity. The latter group appears to be growing whilst the former appears fairly stable.

Around a third of people in the Charity Commission surveys have reported that they or close family or friends work for a charity (as a paid employee, a trustee, a volunteer or a member of an executive or management committee); in 2014 the proportion was 36%.

In the October NPC survey, which asked in more detail about people's contact, 19% of respondents reported volunteering for a charity in the last year or two, 5% had been employed by a charity, 15%

Fig 8: Proportions of people having different types of contact with charities in past year

Which, if any, of the following have you done in the last year or two?



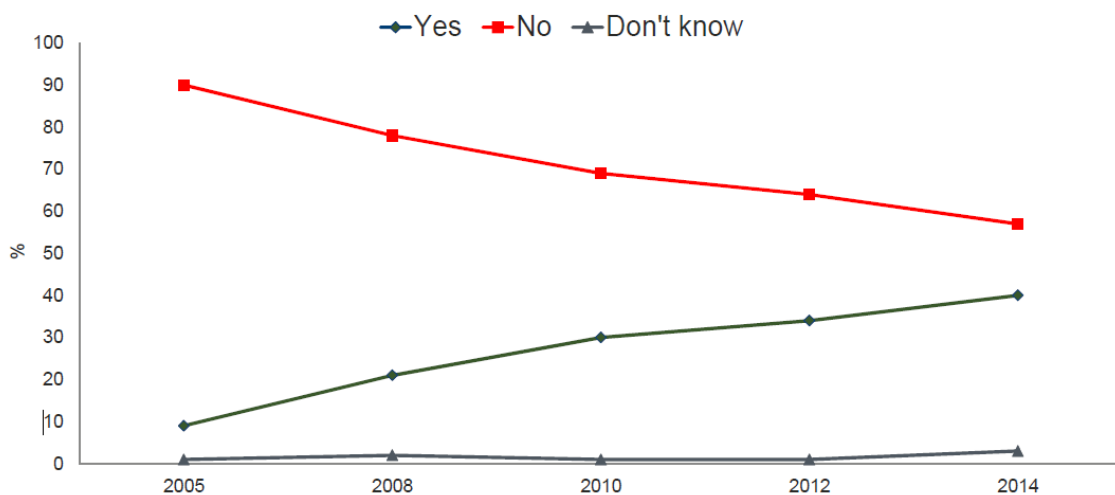
Base: All (1,009)

had a friend or close family member who had worked or volunteered for a charity, and 3% had served as a trustee or manager²¹.

The October NPC survey also asked about a list of other kinds of contact with charities, such as making occasional donations to charity and visiting charity websites or reading other information. They found that nearly a quarter (23%) of respondents had made a regular donation to a charity and over half (57%) had made occasional donations to charity. However, one in six of the population had had no contact or engagement with charities. Section 2.5.3 provides information about the types of charities people say they are most likely to donate to, in terms of their characteristics.

The 2014 Charity Commission survey found an increasing proportion of people reporting using/benefitting from charity services; two fifths (40%) of the public said that they or their close family or friends had ever benefitted from or used the services of a charity, compared with 34% in 2012. This proportion has increased steadily from 2005 when only 9% gave this response. The qualitative research suggests that in addition to more people needing to use charitable services, there is possibly less stigma involved in doing so than there might have been in the past.

Figure 9: Whether respondents, or close family and friends, have ever benefitted from or used the services of a charity



Base: Adults aged 18+ in England and Wales – 2014 (1,163); 2012 (1,142); 2010 (1,150); 2008 (1,008), and 2005 (1,001). Source: Ipsos MORI

Direct experience of a charity, whether as a beneficiary or through working or volunteering for a charity, also comes out as a key reason why people report that their trust in the charity sector has increased. The 2014 survey found that, amongst those reporting that their trust in charities had increased, around a quarter (24%) said this was because they had been

²¹ Note the same people may have reported more than one of these contacts.

using/experiencing a charity's services directly and just under a fifth (18%) said it was because they had begun volunteering for a charity

We might have expected the greater levels of use of charity services to be accompanied by a corresponding increase in the overall trust score, but this has not been the case²².

2.4.2 Knowledge about charities

The evidence generally shows lower levels of trust among people who feel they know little about charities or have no contact with charities. The overall proportion of people who feel they know little about charities has not changed over time.

With regard to more general knowledge about charities, the Charity Commission surveys have tended to show higher overall trust scores among people who report knowing something about charities, based to whether they disagree or agree with the statement / *know very little about how charities are run and managed*²³. The overall proportion of people agreeing that they know very little about how charities are run and managed has not changed over time; it was 56% in 2014, 2012 and 2010.

The October 2014 NPC survey asked specifically *How much, if anything, do you feel you know about charities in the UK*; approximately half of respondents (51%) said they knew 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount' about charities whilst just under half (45%) said they knew 'not very much' or 'nothing at all'²⁴.

2.4.3 How closely related are contact, knowledge and trust?

There is an association between trust in charities and knowledge of and contact with charities (as noted in 2.4.21 and 2.4.2) but levels of trust are not necessarily higher with greater knowledge; a significant minority of people who feel they know a great deal or fair amount about charities nevertheless have low levels of trust.

The October NPC survey looked at the relationship between the types of contact people have with charities and their perceived knowledge about them; for each type of contact they took all people reporting that type of contact and calculated the proportion of them who said they knew a great deal or a fair amount about charities. For many types of contact the proportion feeling they knew about charities was around two-thirds; it was highest among those who had been employed or served as a trustee/manager (78%) and lower (54%) amongst those who had made regular or occasional donations. Among the 196 people who

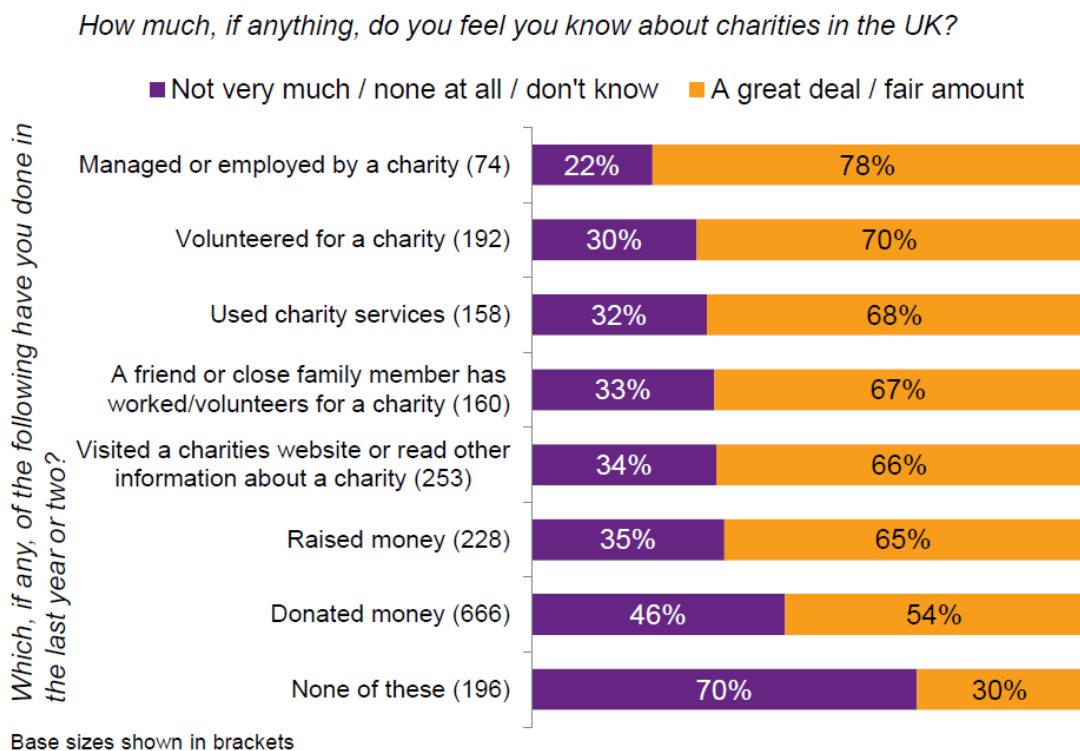
²² This is partly because the average score (mean) is brought down by the 18% of people who say that their trust in charities has decreased and are likely to give five or below as a trust score.

²³ In most years over half of people have agreed that they know little about charities (56% in 2014) and around a third have disagreed (32% in 2014), indicating some knowledge about charities.

²⁴ The other 4% were 'don't know' responses.

reported having no contact or engagement with charities, however, less than a third (30%) felt they knew about charities.

Figure 10: Relationship between knowledge of charities and contact with charities in last year



Source: NPC

The survey also found a relationship between peoples’ perceived knowledge of charities and their levels of trust and confidence. Three in ten (31%) people who felt they knew a great deal or fair amount about charities also reported a high level of trust (8 or more out of ten)—compared to just 17% of those who felt they knew not very much or little. Meanwhile low levels of trust (5 or less out of 10) are highest (41%) amongst those who felt they knew not very much/little. However, while higher levels of knowledge of charities generally went hand-in-hand with higher levels of trust, this was not always the case; nearly a third (30%) of people who felt they knew a great deal or fair amount about charities had low levels of trust. The NPC report suggests that this shows there are reasons for dissatisfaction other than a simple lack of knowledge and that focussing on improving people’s knowledge of charities alone might not improve trust.

Fig 11: Relationship between knowledge of charities and trust and confidence in them

On a scale of 0-10 how much trust and confidence do you have in charities?

Low trust ■ Medium trust ■ High trust ■ Don't know ■



Base: All (1,009)

Source: NPC

The NPC report also presented a broad four-way grouping or segmentation of the population, based on perceived knowledge (those feeling they know at least a fair amount about charities or those who know not very much or nothing) and on trust and confidence (those with a medium/high opinion of charities or those with a low opinion). The four groups were described as 'Informed enthusiasts' (35% of the population), 'uninformed enthusiasts' (26%), 'uninformed detractors' (20%) and 'informed detractors' (15%)²⁵.

²⁵ Informed (know a great deal/ a fair amount about charities); uninformed (knows not very much/nothing at all); enthusiast (scoring trust as 6 out of 10 or higher); detractor (scoring trust as 5 out of 10 or lower)

2.5 How does people's trust vary by their views about the characteristics of charities?

Higher levels of trust are generally found amongst people who mainly associate charities with being small or apolitical or using public donation (compared with those who see them as large, political, or funded by Government). Slightly higher levels of trust are found amongst people who mostly associate charities with being local or volunteer-run or focussed on providing services to people (rather than national/international or staffed by professionals or raising awareness of important issues).

In general people's views of charities are not always accurate, for example they think of them mainly as large, national organisations whereas the majority are small and local.

2.5.1 How does people's trust vary according to the size of charities?

In the 2014 Charity Commission survey, only around a third (35%) of people agreed with the statement *I trust big charities more than smaller charities*, whilst approximately half (49%) disagreed.

In the October NPC survey, when asked a slightly different question about whether *large organisations* or *small organisations* came to mind when they thought about charities, two-thirds of people (67%) said they thought mostly about large organisations, compared with 25% who thought mostly of small organisations. In fact, only 16% of registered charities are large (defined as having an income of more than £100K²⁶), although the larger charities tend to have greater recognition and presence and more resources to promote such aspects.

There were variations in the levels of reported trust by perception of size but the differences were not great; 23% of those perceiving charities as mainly large organisations and 29% of those perceiving charities as mainly small organisations had high levels of trust. (Figure 11)

2.5.2 How does people's trust vary according to whether charities are local, national or international?

The October NPC survey also asked whether local, national or international organisations came to mind when they thought about charities; 45% of people thought mainly of national organisations, 32% of international organisations and 15% of local organisations. This again

²⁶ NCVO, (2013) *UK Civil Society Almanac*

reveals a gap between people's perceptions and the reality that the vast majority of charities are in fact serving local beneficiaries.

There were again minor variations in reported levels of trust by type of charity; high levels of trust were reported by 30% of those thinking of charities as mainly local, compared with 26% of those thinking of charities as mainly national and 21% of those thinking of charities as being international.

Figure 12: How other perceptions of charities vary with trust and confidence

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TRUST & CONFIDENCE



Base sizes shown in brackets

Source: NPC

2.5.3 How does people's trust vary according to other factors?

Survey respondents were asked whether '*run by volunteers*' or '*run by professionals*' came to mind when people thought about charities; approximately half (51%) thought mainly of volunteers and two-fifths (41%) thought mainly of professionals.

Levels of trust were slightly higher amongst those who think charities are mainly run by volunteers; 28% had high levels of trust and 29% had low levels of trust, compared with 22% and 41% respectively of those who mainly think charities are run by professionals.

People were also asked whether they mainly thought of charities as *focussed on raising awareness of issues* (41% said this) or *focussed on providing services to people* (51%). Levels of trust were slightly higher amongst those who mainly thought charities were focussed on providing services to people; 28% of them had high levels of trust, compared with 22% of those who saw charities as focussed on raising awareness of issues.

Looking particularly at charities' involvement in public services, the October NPC survey also asked to what extent respondents agreed or disagreed that '*Charities should be more involved in running public services*'. One in four (23%) agreed whilst a higher proportion (33%) disagreed and the largest proportion of people (36%) had no opinion either way. When asked about staff and volunteers specifically in relation to public services, opinion was also evenly split; 28% of respondents agreed that '*Charities that deliver public services should always use paid staff rather than volunteers*', whilst 27% disagreed and the largest proportion, 38%, neither agreed nor disagreed.

This is interesting in the light of other research²⁷ that has shown little evidence of decline in support for state provision of public services and has identified a feeling that voluntary work should be encouraged to augment existing roles in public services and local communities, not to replace them

The **NPC October survey** found that people had strong preferences about the types of charities they would prefer to donate to with respect to characteristics such as '*run by volunteers*', '*focussed on providing services*' and '*get their funding mainly from the public*'. For example, 70% of people said they would be more likely to donate to charities focussed on providing services to people, compared to 14% being more likely to donate to charities focussed on raising awareness of issues. Size of organisation was also a factor; 59% of respondents reported being more likely to donate money to small organisations, in contrast with 25% being more likely to donate money to large organisations. The second report of the October survey analysed these donation preferences by voting intentions²⁸; all groups said they would prefer to donate to smaller organisations but this was particularly the case

²⁷ See, for example, *Can you tell what it is yet? Public attitudes towards the Big Society*, Andrew Defty, 2011. <http://www.social-policy.org.uk/lincoln2011/Defty.pdf>

²⁸ Which political party would you support in a general election?

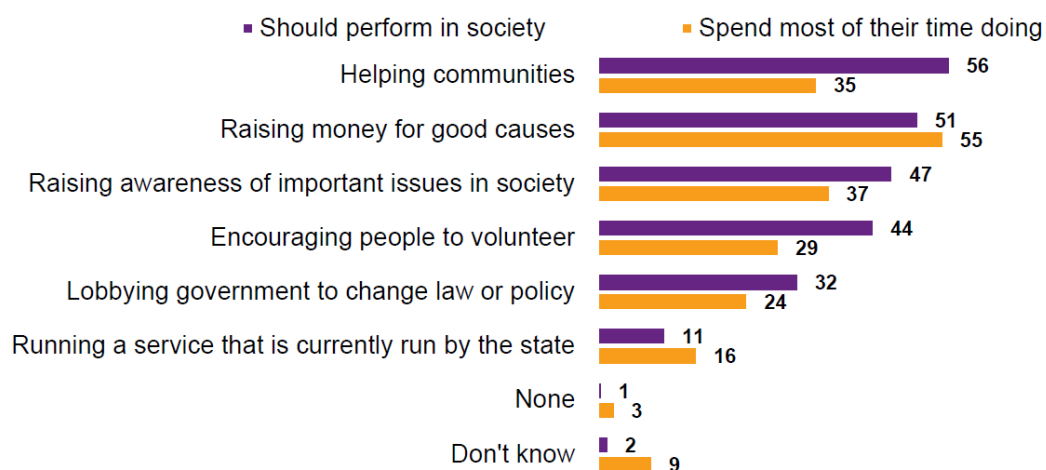
for UKIP supporters (approximately 70% compared with around 60% of supporters of other political parties and around 50% of those who were undecided or did not know which party they would support).

In the **NPC January survey**, people were asked about the roles they thought charities should be performing²⁹; the most frequently selected were *helping communities* (56%), *raising money for important causes* (51%) and *raising awareness of important issues in society* (47%). People who had reported becoming more negative about charities had slightly different views about the role of charities: they were more likely than average to see charities' role as 'helping communities' (65% compared with 54% of those who were more positive or neutral), but less likely to think charities should be 'raising awareness of important issues in society' (42% compared with 49%).

That survey also found a gap between what the public thinks charities *should* be doing as opposed to what they think they *actually* spend most of their time doing. Although over half (56%) of people thought charities should be *helping communities*, only round a third (35%) thought they actually spent their time on this. For many (44%), *encouraging people to volunteer* was a priority but far fewer (29%) think this is actually happening. A smaller gap was found in the opposite direction between the 51% of respondents who thought charities should be *raising money for good causes* and the 55% who felt that they actually spent their time on this

Figure 13: Public's views of the roles charities should perform and what they actually do

Which, if any, of the following are roles that you think charities should perform in society? And which of the below do you think that charities spend most of their time doing?



Base: 1,035 GB adults surveyed in January 2014

Source: NPC

²⁹ Which of the following, if any, are roles that you think charities should be performing in society? A list of six roles followed plus a 'none of these' response. See questionnaire in Appendix 2 for full list.

Greater variations in levels of trust were seen by two other factors asked about in the **October NPC survey**: source of funding and involvement in political issues. Most people (80%) thought that charities *get their funding mainly from the public*, with a relatively small proportion of people (12%) thinking charities tended to *get their funding mainly from Government/business*. Among the latter group, however, 55% gave charities a low trust rating, compared with 31% of those who thought that charities *get their funding mainly from the public*. (Figure 11)

Two-thirds of people (67%) thought that charities were *not involved in political issues*, whereas a quarter (25%) thought charities were *political*. Among the respondents who thought of charities as *political*, 47% of them give charities a low trust rating, compared with 30% of those who perceive charities as *not involved in political issues* (Figure 11)

The October NPC survey also asked about which types of charities people would be more likely to donate to, using the categories described above. In general the characteristics associated with higher levels of trust were also associated with a higher likelihood of donation³⁰.

2.6 To what extent do trust and related issues vary by socio-demographic characteristics?

Levels of trust vary somewhat by age and social grade, with higher levels of trust generally being found amongst younger people aged 18-34 and people in social grades AB. There is similar variation in some related factors, such as people's use of charities, contact with charities and knowledge of charities.

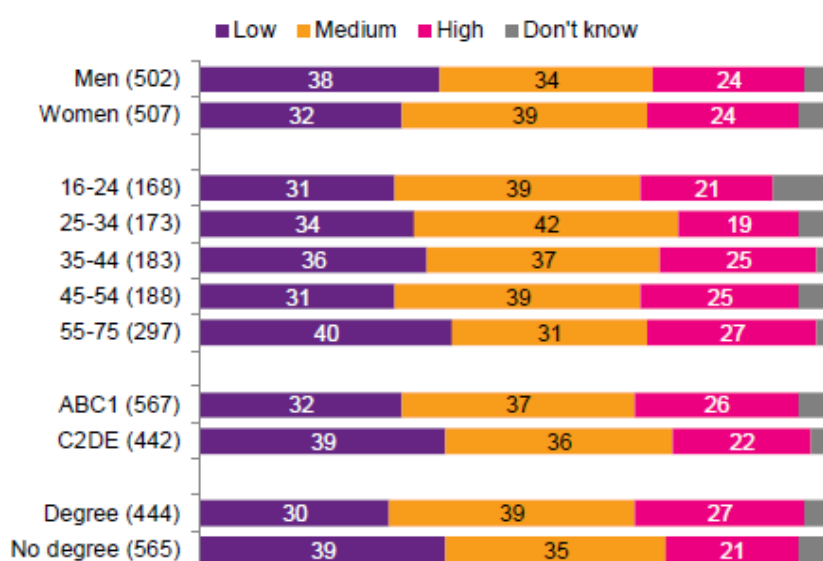
The survey reports contain relatively little analysis of trust and perception of charities by socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics. **The Charity Commission surveys** report no gender differences in trust and related issues and the **NPC surveys** found that attitudes did not vary much between men and women. In contrast, the **Charity Commission surveys** have found variations between age-groups in levels of trust; in 2014 the highest level of trust in charities was found among people aged 18-34 (average score of 7.0) and the lowest among people aged 65 and over (average score of 6.3). Trust in other types of institutions was not necessarily higher among young people; overall there was no clear pattern of how trust varied by age across all the institutions asked about.

There were similar variations by age in the extent to which trust and confidence had changed over time; 17% of people aged 18-34 reported that their trust in charities had increased over

³⁰ See page 5 of NPC report <http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/matter-of-trust/>

the last two year (compared to 3% of people aged 65 and over) and 14% of people aged 18-34 reported that their trust in charities had decreased over the last two year (compared to 27% of people aged 65 and over). The January NPC survey found older people more likely to report having become more negative about charities; three in ten (31%) of the over- 55s said they had become more negative compared to 17% of 18-34 year olds, with people in the middle age range of 35-54 most likely to be neutral (51% saying their views of charities had not changed). The October NPC survey found that older people aged 55-75 were slightly more likely to give a low trust score than other age groups (40% did so, compared to 35% of all ages) and were the least likely to give a medium score.

Figure 14: Trust in charities by gender, age, social grade and qualifications



Base: All (1,009)

Some of the variation by age appears to be related to factors discussed earlier; for example, people aged 18-34 were more likely than those aged 65 and over to say they had used or benefitted from a charity (40% compared to 30%) and were less likely to agree that *charities spend too much of their funds on salaries and administration*.

There were also variations in levels of trust by social grade. People in social grades AB reported higher levels of trust (average score of 6.9 in the 2014 Charity Commission survey) and people in social grades DE reporting lower levels of trust (average score of 6.3). Similar patterns were found by the October NPC survey; people in classes C2DE and those without degrees were a little more likely to say they have low trust in charities, 39% compared with 35% of all age-groups. (See Figure 14)

In **the Charity Commission surveys** people in social grades ABC1 also reported greater levels of knowledge (in 2014, around half said *they knew very little about how charities are run and managed*, compared with approximately two-thirds of people in social grades DE) and more contact with charities (more than two-fifths of people in social grades AB said that

they or close family or friends had worked for a charity, compared with just over a quarter (285) of people in social grades DE). With regard to use of charities, however, the pattern was in the opposite direction; people in the C2DE social grades were more likely than those in the ABC1 social grades to say that they or their friends have benefitted from the services of a charity.

In the second report of the NPC October survey³¹, which analysed levels of trust by voting intentions²⁸, supporters of mainstream political parties had similar levels of trust whilst UKIP supporters had lower levels of trust; over half (53%) those who said they intended to vote for UKIP had low trust scores compared with between a half and a third of the supporters of other parties. Similar differences by voting intentions were found in other aspects of people's outlook on charities. NPC urge caution in interpretation, however, because their poll provides only a snapshot picture of what is a fluid political context.

The **NPC October survey**³² also found small differences by gender and age in several issues related to trust; for example, men were less likely to raise any unprompted¹⁸ concerns about charities (53% did so compared with 60% of women) and older people aged 55-75 were more likely to raise concerns (67%, compared with 57% of people of all ages). Men also appeared to be less concerned about how charities use their money³³; 27% mentioned concerns under this broad heading, compared to 35% of women. When asked specifically about transparency, older people aged 55-75 were more likely to agree that '*It's important to me that charities are clear about how they spend their money*' (91%, including 68% who *strongly* agreed, compared with 82% of respondents of all ages).

In relation to the role of charities, older people were more likely to agree that '*Charities should just concentrate on helping people in need, rather than campaigning to change society as a whole*'; 59% of those aged between 55-75 agreed, compared with 47% of people of all ages. There were also differences by gender ((52% of men agreeing with the statement, compared with 42% of women) and income (55% of those in the lowest income band agreeing).

³¹ See Paper 3 relating to the NPC October survey, Charities, Voters and Trust, *NPC*, Dec 2014

³² Having Their Say: What the Public likes and dislikes about Charities, *NPC*, Jan 2015

³³ The concerns raised were analysed and categorised under a number of specific headings and three broad headings: how charities use their money; how charities raise money; and what charities do.

3. Conclusion

Overall, most of the evidence finds no change in the public's overall level of trust and confidence in charities and trust in charities remains high in comparison with other public bodies and institutions. There are, however, some slightly more negative perceptions of certain aspects of charities' conduct, and some aspects are becoming an increasingly important factor to the public. For example, the proportion of people who trust charities to *'ensure that a reasonable proportion of donations make it to the end cause'* has not changed but a higher proportion now consider this to be the most important factor affecting their trust and confidence in charities overall and it now appears to be the most important driver of trust¹⁵ (whereas previously *making a positive difference to the cause they work for* was the most important driver). Similarly, although a large minority of people raised no concerns when asked if charities were doing things wrong, almost a third reported concerns relating to aspects of the way charities use money. Most often this related to the amount of money spent on running costs and employee or senior management salaries but it also included concerns around transparency in how charities spend their money, for example *'not stating where the money is going'*

One of the views coming out of both the roundtable meetings held last year and the Understanding Charities Group is that charities must be proactive about upholding public trust. To better target possible actions and activities, we may need further robust research to give us greater insight into what affects public trust and understanding; the existing evidence summarised here gives us only a partial picture.

Appendix 1: Summary of methodology and content of the three key surveys of trust and confidence

1. The Charity Commission survey

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-trust-and-confidence-in-charities-rs31>

The Charity Commission commissions a survey of public trust and confidence in the sector biennially; it was first conducted in 2005 (in response to the Charities Bill 2005, which introduced a statutory objective for the Charity Commission to increase levels of public trust and confidence in charities) and was repeated in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014.

Methodology

The methodology has been broadly the same for each wave. In 2014 a representative survey of 1,163 adults aged 18 and over in England and Wales was conducted by telephone in March 2014, by Ipsos MORI, based on a Random Digit Dialling (RDD) sample. Quotas were set on key demographic variables³⁴ so that findings from the sample could be weighted to be representative of adults in England and Wales. Four discussion groups of 8-10 people were also conducted, to explore some of the issues in greater depth and to add context and understanding to the quantitative data.

Issues covered

Investigate public trust, confidence and general attitudes towards charities in 2014, and reflect on any changes since the previous research was conducted, including:

- overall trust and confidence in charities;
- factors affecting trust in charities;
- general perceptions of charities;
- trust in specific aspects of charities' performance;
- trust in charities to provide public services;
- awareness and understanding of charity regulation and the Charity Commission's role
- levels of involvement with, and benefit from, charities.
- Explore the key drivers for overall trust.
- Explore variations by age, gender, region, socio-economic group and other key demographics.
- Compare the results for trust in charities against other areas of society.

2. The NPC survey

³⁴ The variables were: gender; age; socio-economic group; working status; region; ethnicity

Two NPC surveys of attitudes towards charities and their role were carried out in January and October 2014³⁵. One reports was published on the January survey

<http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/mind-the-gap/> and on the October survey

and three on the October survey :

<http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/matter-of-trust/>

<http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/charities-voters-trust/>

<http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/having-their-say-what-the-public-likes-and-dislikes-about-charities/>

The surveys were carried out by Ipsos MORI with a representative sample of more than 1000 adults across Great Britain. Interviews were conducted by telephone on 11-14 January 2014 and on-line on 10-14 October 2014. Data were weighted to match the profile of the population.

Issues covered

As well as asking about general attitudes towards charities and their role, the survey focused on five key issues: executive pay; delivering public services; lobbying; fundraising; impact.

3. The NfP Synergy Charity Awareness Monitor

<http://nfpsynergy.net/trust-2014>

NfP Synergy carries out a monthly survey of attitudes towards charities and other organisations, known as the NfP Synergy Charity Awareness Monitor (CAM). It enables charities to find out how they are perceived by the most vital of audiences; the general public. It also gives an insight into what the public think about volunteering, campaigning and donating to charity, whilst providing an accurate benchmark for charities to measure themselves against.

CAM is NfP Synergy's largest research programme, with over 60 subscribing charity members across a wide range of sectors. It is marketed as the most comprehensive way to find out how a voluntary organisation is viewed by the general public and how they are interacting with the third sector, thus giving regular, extensive benchmarking data on well over 100 charities, allowing comparisons of awareness and support levels with other voluntary organisation across the sector.

³⁵ This builds on previous research by NPC, including *Money for good UK* and *Making an impact*

Methodology

NfP Synergy regularly surveys a sample of 1000 16+ year olds throughout mainland Britain, asking them a range of charity-related questions. The latest survey was carried out in April 2014. Each wave samples 1,000 members of the public, with the sample balanced in terms of gender, age, region and social grade. The research uses an online methodology and accesses respondents through a panel.

Results can be segmented by demographic characteristics (gender, age and social grade; region; working status; marital status and children in the household; pet ownership; media consumption).

Issues covered

The survey asks people to indicate how much trust they have in each of a range of 24 public bodies and institutions (on a scale: very little; not much; not sure; quite a lot; great deal; haven't heard of).

People are also asked to look at 17 statements a charity could make about their costs and, for each, indicate to what extent they would find it **reassuring about making a donation** to that charity or **convincing that the charity are doing a good job** (on a rating scale: not at all reassuring/convincing; not very reassuring/convincing; quite reassuring/convincing; very reassuring/convincing; not sure).